

WHAT CONGRESS AND GANDHI HAVE DONE TO THE UNTOUCHABLES

CHAPTER II A SHABBY SHOW Congress Abandons Its Plan

I

MR. GANDHI entered Indian politics in 1919. Very soon thereafter, he captured the Congress. He not only captured it but overhauled it completely and changed it out of recognition. He introduced three main changes. The Old Congress had no sanctions. It only passed a resolution and left it there, hoping that the British Government will take some action on it. If the British Government did not, it merely repeated the resolution next year and year after it. The old Congress was purely a gathering of intellectuals. It did not go down to the masses to secure their active participation in the political movement, as it did not believe in mass action. The old Congress had no machinery and no funds to carry on mass agitation. It did not believe in spectacular political demonstration to impress the British Government of the magnitude of its strength or to attract and interest the masses. The new Congress changed all this. It made the Congress a mass organisation by opening its membership to all and sundry. Any one paying four annas a year could be a member of the Congress. It forged sanctions behind its resolutions. by adopting the policy of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. It made it a policy to stage demonstration of non-co-operation and civil disobedience and to court gaol. It launched a countrywide organisation and propaganda in favour of the Congress. It put out what is called a Constructive Programme of social amelioration. To finance these activities it started a fund of one crore of rupees. It was called the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Thus by 1922, the Congress was completely transformed by Mr. Gandhi. The new Congress was entirely different from the old, except in, name.

The Constructive Programme of social amelioration was an important feature of the Congress. It was outlined by the Working Committee of the Congress at its meeting in Bardoli, held in February 1922. It was also known as the Bardoli Programme. The resolution setting out the details of the programme ran as follows :—

"The Working Committee advises all Congress Organisations to be engaged in the following activities: —

(1) To enlist at least one crore members of the Congress.

(2) To popularise the spinning wheel and to organise the manufacture of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.

(3) To organise national schools.

(4) To organise the Depressed Classes for a better life, to improve their social, mental and moral condition, to induce them to send their children to national schools and to provide for them the ordinary facilities which the other citizens enjoy.

(5) To organise the temperance campaign amongst the people addicted to the drink habit by house to house visits and to rely more upon appeal to the drinker in his home than upon picketing.

(6) To organise village and town Panchayats for the private settlement of all disputes, reliance being placed solely upon force of public opinion and the truthfulness of Panchayat decisions to ensure obedience to them,

(7) In order to promote and emphasise unity among all classes and races and mutual goodwill, the establishment of which is the aim of the movement of non-co-operation, to organise a social service department that will render help to all, irrespective of differences, in times of illness or accident.

(8) To continue the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund collections and call upon every Congressman or Congress sympathiser to pay at least one-hundredth part of his annual income for 1921. Every province to send every month twenty-five per cent of its income from the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund to the All-India Congress Committee."

The resolution was placed before the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held in Delhi on 20th February 1922 for confirmation, which it did. I am not concerned to set out what happened to the different items in this Programme of constructive work. I am concerned with only one item namely that which relates to the Depressed Classes and it is that part of it which I propose to deal with.

I will relate the story of the fate, which overtook this part of the Bardoli resolution relating to the Untouchables, stage by stage. To begin with the story, after the Bardoli resolution was confirmed by the All-India Congress Committee, the matter was remitted to the Working Committee for action. The Working Committee took up the matter at its meeting held in Lucknow in June

1022. On that part of the Bardoli problem, which related to the uplift of the Untouchables, the Working Committee passed the following resolutions: -

"This Committee hereby appoints a Committee consisting of Swami Shradhanandji, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Messrs. 1. K. Yajnik and G. B. Deshpande to formulate a scheme embodying practical measures to be adopted for bettering the condition of the so-called Untouchables throughout the country and to place it for consideration before the next meeting of this Committee, the amount to be raised for the scheme to be Rs. 2 lakhs for the present. "

This resolution of the Working Committee was placed before the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held in Lucknow in June 1922. It accepted the resolution of the Working Committee after making an amendment to it saying that "the amount to be raised for the scheme should be 5 lakhs for the present " instead of 2 lakhs as put forth in the resolution of the Working Committee.

It seems that before the resolution appointing the Committee was adopted by the Working Committee, one of its Members Swami Shradhanandji tendered his resignation of the membership of the Committee. At the very sitting at which the Working Committee passed the resolution appointing a Committee, another resolution on the same subject and to the following effect was passed by it: —

"Read letter from Swami Shradhanandji, dated 8th June 1922 for an advance for drawing up a scheme for Depressed Classes work. Resolved that Mr. Gangadhar Rao B. Deshpande be appointed convenor of the Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose and he be requested to convene a meeting at an early date, and that Swami Shradhananda's letter be referred to the Sub-Committee."

The formation of a Committee marks the second stage in the history of this interesting resolution.

The next reference to the resolution appointing the Committee is found in the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee held in Bombay in July 1922. At that meeting the Committee passed the following resolution: —

"That the General Secretary be asked to request Swami Shradhanandji to reconsider his resignation and withdraw it and a sum of Rs. 500 be remitted to the Convener, Syt. G. B. Deshpande, for the contingent expenses of the Depressed Classes Sub-Committee."

Here the matter ended, so far as the year 1922 was concerned. Nothing further seems to have been done. The year 1928 came on. Seeing that nothing was done to set going the Scheme for ameliorating the condition of

the Untouchables, the Working Committee which met also at Gaya in January, 1928 took up the matter and passed the following resolution; —

"With reference to Swami Shradhanand's resignation, resolved that the remaining members of the Depressed Classes Sub-Committee do form the Committee and Mr. Yajnik be the convener."

Thereafter* the All-India Congress Committee which met Bombay in May 1923 passed the following resolution: —

"Resolved that the question, of the condition of the Untouchables be referred to the Working Committee for necessary action."

Here ends the second stage in the history of the resolution remitting the question of the Untouchables to a special Committee. The third stage in its history is marked by the resolution of the Working Committee passed in. "May 1923 at its meeting held in Bombay. This resolution ran as follows: —

"Resolved that while some improvement has been effected in the treatment of the so-called Untouchables in response of the policy of the Congress, this Committee is conscious that much work remained yet to be done in this respect and in as much as this question of untouchability concerns the Hindu community particularly, it requests the All-India Hindu Mahasabha also to take up this matter and to make strenuous efforts to remove this evil from amidst the Hindu Community."

Thus is told the sad tale of the resolution and how it began and how it ended. What shameful close to a flaring start!

It will be seen how the Congress washed its hands of the problem of the Untouchables. It need not have added insult to injury by relegating it to the Hindu Mahasabha. There could not be a body most unsuited to take up the work of the uplift of the Untouchables than the Hindu Mahasabha. If there is any body which is quite unfit for addressing itself to the problem of the Untouchables, it is the Hindu Mahasabha. It is a militant Hindu organisation. Its aim and object is to conserve in every way everything that is Hindu, religious and cultural. It is not a social reform association. It is a purely political organisation, whose main object and aim are to combat the influence of the Muslims in Indian politics. Just to preserve its political strength, it wants to maintain its social solidarity, and its way to maintain social solidarity is not to talk about caste or untouchability. How could such a body have been selected by the Congress for carrying on the work of the Untouchables passes my comprehension. This shows that the Congress wanted somehow to get rid of an inconvenient problem and wash its hands of it. The Hindu Mahasabha of course did not come forth to undertake the work for it had no urge for it and also because the Congress had merely passed a pious resolution recommending the work to them without making any promise for

financial provision. So the project came to an inglorious and an ignominious end.

Before closing this chapter, it would not be unprofitable to ascertain why did the Congress abandon the work of social amelioration of the Untouchables of which it had made so much show? Was it because the Congress intended that the scheme should be a modest one not costing more than two to five lakhs of rupees but felt that from that point of view they had made a mistake in including Swami Shradhanand in the Committee and rather than allow the Swami to confront them with a huge scheme which the Congress could neither accept nor reject? The Congress thought it better in the first instance to refuse to make him the convener⁵ and subsequently to dissolve the Committee and hand over the work to the Hindu Mahasabha. Circumstances are not quite against such a conclusion. The Swami was the greatest and the most sincere champion of the Untouchables. There is not the slightest doubt that if he had worked on the Committee he would have produced a very big scheme. That the Congress did not want him in the Committee and was afraid that he would make big demand on Congress funds for the cause of the Untouchables is clear from the correspondence⁶ that passed between him and Pandit Motilal Nehru, the then General Secretary of the Congress, and which is printed in the Appendix. If this conclusion is right, then it shows how empty of sincerity were the words of the Congress, which passed that resolution.

Did the Congress abandon the programme because it was revolutionary? The resolution was in no sense a revolutionary resolution. This will be clear from the note which the Working Committee had appended to the resolution and which the All-India Congress Committee had approved. The note said: —

"Whilst therefore in places, where the prejudice against the Untouchables is still strong separate schools and separate wells must be maintained out of Congress funds, every effort should be made to draw such children to national schools and to persuade the people to allow the Untouchables to use the common wells."

Obviously, the Congress was not out for the abolition of Untouchability. It had accepted the policy of separate schools and separate wells. The resolution did no more than to undertake amelioration of the condition of the Untouchables. And even such a timid and mild programme the Congress was unable to carry through and which it gave up without remorse or shame.

Did the Congress abandon the programme because it had no funds? Quite the contrary. The Congress had started the Tilak Swaraj Fund in 1921. How much money did the Congress collect? The following table will give some idea. Rupees one crore and thirty lakhs were contributed by the public to the fund. The fund was collected to carry out Congress propaganda and to finance the constructive programme of the Congress as drafted by the Working Committee at Bardoli. How was this huge amount spent by the Congress? Some idea as to the purposes on which the money out of this fund was spent can be gathered from the list of grants voted by the Working Committee during the years 1921, 1922 and 1928.

TABLE 1
TILAKSWARAJ FUND 7
RECEIPTS

	1921	1922	1923	Total
	Rs. a. Ps.	Rs. a. Ps.	Rs. a. Ps.	Rs. a. Ps.
General Collections Annexure No. 1	64,31,779 15 10	3,92,430 2 6	2,64,288 9 1	70,88,498 11 5
Specific (ear-marked) Donations or Grants Annexure No. II	37,32,230 2 10	9,45,552 1 4	7,10,801 10 3	53,88,583 14 6
Add--Miscellaneous Receipts, Interest, Other Funds, Femine, Flood, Provincial Membership, Delegation, Affiliation, etc., for 1921-23				5,42,332 5 7
				1,30,19,415 15 7

I. Grants Voted in 1921 ⁸

1. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Calcutta on January 31st and February 1st, 2nd and 3rd 1921 :—

1. Rs. 1,00,000 to remain at the disposal of Mahatma Gandhi for the support of lawyers who give up their practice and stand in need of support (iv).

2. Read the following telegram dated the 31st January 1921 from Syt. C. Rajagopalachariar :—

"Regret unable to attend meeting. Selected full time public workers for Tamil, Kerala part Karnatak about hundred, of whom about forty lawyers suspending practice. Pending collection Tilak Fund sanction drawing Rs. 5,600 per month. Students' movement progressing rapidly though newspapers do not show up news. Must carry on against parental opposition, least two months. Must draw three thousand per month for this. Committee must immediately wire authority issuing Swarajya Fund receipts in name of Congress for convenient denominations like Khilafat receipts. Confident to make up all advances in three months. Do not hope large sums Madras."

Resolved that a sum of Rs. 8,600 be advanced to Tamil, Kerala and the Karnatak parts of the Madras Presidency for one month for the present, and for future advances the matter be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee (xx).

II. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Bezwada on the 81st March and 1st April 1921 :—

3. A lump sum of Rs. 6,000 be advanced to Pandit Mohanlal Nehru, Secretary, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, for carrying on propaganda and collecting funds (v),

4. Rs. 17,000 be sanctioned for the remainder of the current year for the expenses of the office of the President, the Secretaries, the Cashier, and that out of the above a sum of Rs. 300 per mensem be assigned to Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar for the expenses of his secretary and the President's steno-typist (vii), 5. A sum of 1,000 dollars remitted by cable to Mr. D. V. S. Rao of the India Home Rule League of America, 1,400 Broad-way, New York (viii)."

III. The Working Committee at its resolution No. 18 dated 81st July 1921 appointed a Grants Sub-Committee to dispose of ail applications for grants. The Sub-Committee consisted of Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj The following grants were voted by the Grants Sub-Committee in the course of several meetings :—

"6. A sum of Rs. I lakh be voted as a grant for Swadeshi work in Bihar and a loan of Rs. 4 lakhs recommended for the same purpose (i).

7. A loan of Rs. 35,000 to the C. P. (Hindustani) Provincial Congress Committee for Swadeshi (ii).

8. Rs. 25,000 for famine relief in the U.P. (iii).

9. Rs. 25,000 to the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee for famine relief, and the Jagraon School (iv).

10. Rs. 50,000 on the telegraphic application for the relief of the distressed in Malabar (v).

11. Rs. 15,000 to the Gandhi Ashram, Benares City (vi).

12. Rs. 10,000 to the Pallipadu Ashram (vii).

13. Rs. 15,000 to the Andhra Jatheeya Kalashala, Masuli-patam (viii).

14. Rs. 10,000 to the Secretary, Taluka Congress Committee, Karjat (Maharashtra) (xx).

15. Rs. 10,000 to the Anatha Vidyarthi Griha, Chinchwad (Maharashtra) (x).

16. The applications of (1) Mr, K, G. Patade, Assistant General Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, (2) of the Kulladaikurichi National School, Vidyasangam and (3) of the Rajahmundry Depressed Classes Mission were rejected as unbacked and not in accordance with the instructions issued by the Sub-Committee (xii),

17. Rs. 10000 to the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee to be principally spent on Swadeshi and the popularising of the hand-spinning and hand-weaving (xx).

18. Rs. 60,000 to the Madras Provincial Congress Committee (xxii).

19. Rs. 1,50,000 set apart for the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee (xxiii).

20. Rs. 63,000 to the Sind Provincial Congress Committee (xxiv).

21. Rs. 25,000 for famine relief in the Ceded Districts in Andhra (xxv).

22. Rs. 20,000 to the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee (xxvi).

23. Rs. 20,000 be granted to the Ganjam District Congress Committee for Swadeshi and for popularising hand-spinning and hand-weaving (xvii)."

The Working Committee dissolved the Sub-Committee by resolution No. 8 dated the 6th November 1921 and took the question, of voting grants in its own hands.

IV. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Delhi on the 3rd, 5th and 6th November 1921;—

"24. Rs. 25,000 to Mr. Phukan of Assam for the purchase of cotton to be used in the manufacture of hand-spun yarn and khaddar (ix).

25. Rs. 5,000 to the Krishnapuram, Guntur District Andhra (x),

26. Rs. 10,000 as an additional grant to the Andhra Jateeya Kalashala (xi).

27. Rs. 1,000 to the Rajahmundry Depressed Classes Mission (xii).

28. Rs. 5,000 to the Angalur Jateeya Parishramalayam (xM).

29, Rs. 3,000 to Kautaram, Andhra (xiv). 30. Rs. 15,000 to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee for general Swadeshi work (xv).

31. Rs. 3,000 to the Masulipatam District Congress Committee (xvi).

32. Rs. 30,000 to the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee earmarked for the manufacture of handspun yarn and khaddar (xvii).

33. Rs. 3,000 to help the toddy tappers of the Thana District who wanted to give up their profession (xviii).

34. Rs. 5,000 to the Nagpur Tilak Vidyalaya (xix).

35. Rs. 5,000 to the Nagpur Asahyogashram (xx).

36. Rs. 25,000 to the Ajmere Provincial Congress Committee for the purpose of increasing the production of khaddar and charkah yarn (xxi).

37. Rs. 18,00,000 if possible, and in any case, at least Rs, 10,00,000 for Gujarat (xxii).

38. Rs. 40,000 to be immediately remitted to Sjt. C. Raja-gopalachariar for the relief of the distressed in Malabar (xxiii)."

V. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on the 22nd and 28rd November 1921 :—

"39. Rs. 10,000 to the Jat Anglo Sanskrit High School, Rohtak, Punjab (iii).

40, Rs. 25,000 to the Bijapur District Congress Committee for famine relief and Swadeshi work (iii).

41. Rs. 30,000 to help the dismissed mill-labourers of Madras by giving them Swadeshi work (iii)."

II. Grants Voted in 1922.

1. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on 17th January 1922 :—

"42. Application by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee for Rs. 50,000 already sanctioned and for a further grant of one lakh of rupees for Swadeshi work, be referred to Mahatma Gandhi for final disposal (ii).

43, The application of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee for a remittance of Rs. 25,000, the balance out of the sanctioned grant of Rs. 50,000 be referred to Mahatma Gandhi for final disposal (vi)."

II. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Delhi on 26th February 1922 ;—

"44. Rs. 10,000 for initial expenditure on foreign scheme prepared by Mahatma Gandhi (i).

45. Rs. 14,000 for the office expenditure for the current year (iv).'"

III. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Ahmedabad on 17th and 18th March 1922 ;—

"46. Rs. 3,00,000 for organizing a larger production and marketing of khaddar (i).

47. Rs. 10,000 out of Rs. 50,000 already sanctioned for the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee (ix).

48. Rs. 5,000 to the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee for general Congress work; amount to be deducted from the sum of Rs. 84,000

sanctioned for relief in Malabar and further Rs. 20,000 out of the above amount of Rs. 84,000 be remitted for relief work (x).

49. Rs. 10,000 to the Rohtak Anglo-Vernacular School {xi).

50. Rs. 15,000 out of the amount of Rs. 25,000 sanctioned for famine relief in the Ceded Districts be paid to Sjt. T. Prakasam representing the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (xii)."

IV. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Calcutta on the 20th, 21st and 22nd April 1922:—

"51. Rs. 5,000 to the Antyala Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, for organizing education amongst Depressed Classes in Gujarat (v).

52. Rs. 40,000 as loan to Moulvi Badrul Hasan of Hyderabad Deccan to be exclusively devoted to the Khaddar work (vi). 53. Rs. 25,000 to the Nationalist Journals Ltd., to enable them to re-start the Independent and run it on Congress lines, providing for a lien on. properties of the Company for the amount advanced {xix},"

V. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on the 12th, 18th, 14th and 15th May 1922 :—

"54. Rs. 17,381 to the Antyaja Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, in addition to Rs. 5,000 already granted (x).

55. Resolved that the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee's application for Rs. 1,25,000 for Shahadara Depressed Classes settlement cannot be considered unless the Working Committee is satisfied that sufficient funds are raised locally to start the scheme and the scheme so started is in working order (xi).

56. Resolved that Rs. 5,000 be earmarked for Ahmednagar Depressed Classes home and that the amount be recommended to be paid when the Working Committee is satisfied that the home is started by local efforts and is in working order (xii).

57. Rs. 10,000 be earmarked for Depressed Classes work in Madras, as applied for by Mr. S. Srinivas Iyengar, to be paid when the application is sent to this Committee through the Provincial Congress Committee and on this Committee being satisfied that at least an equal amount is raised by local effort (xlii).

58. Rs. 7,000 to Mr. T. Prakasam for Depressed Classes work in Andhra (xxiv)."

VI. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in. Lucknow on June 6th, 7th and 10th, 1922 :—

"59. Rs. 50,000 for khaddar work in Sind Province (vii). 60. Rs. 1,000 be advanced to Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar for contingent expenses (viii)."

VII. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Delhi on 30th June 1922 :—

"61. Rs. 180 per mensem for the next three months be sanctioned for the expenses of six workers from Bengal to serve in Assam (vi)."

VIII. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on 18th and 19th July 1922 :—' "62. Rs. 5,000 to Assam (i).

63. Rs. 1,50,000 each as loan for Khaddar work in Andhra and Utkal (x)."

IX. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Calcutta on 18th, 19th and 25th November 1922 ;—

"64. Rs. 3,00,000 to Gujarat as grant (xii). 65. Rs. 16,000 for the expenses of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee (xxi)."

III. Grants Voted in 1923.

1. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Gaya on the 1st and 2nd of January 1928 :—

"66. Rs. 3,000 to the General Secretary, Indian National Social Conference, for the removal of untouchability and the promotion of temperance and inter-communal unity (xxii),

67. Rs. 1,200 as aid to the Navayuga, a Hindi daily paper of Allahabad, on condition that it would carry on propaganda in pursuance of the resolutions of the Congress held at Gaya (xxx), 68. Rs. 10,000 for the Congress Publicity Bureau (xxxii)."

II. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Allahabad on 26th and 28th February 1928 :—

"69. Rs. 10,000 for the Depressed Classes work by the Tamil Desh Provincial Congress Committee (vi).

70. Loan of Rs. 15,000 be advanced to the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee on the application of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (x).

71. A loan of Rs. 15,000 be advanced to Tamil Desh-Provincial Congress Committee on the application of Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar (x).

72. Rs. 5,000 granted to the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee for Gandhi Ashram, Benares (xi)."

III. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th 27th and 28th May 1923 :—

"73. Loan of Rs. 5 lakhs to the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee to relieve the surplus stock of khadi in various provinces in the country (v),

74. Loan of Rs. 50,000 be advanced to Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for Khadi work (viii).

75. Rs. 15,000 to the Bihar Rashtriya Vidyalaya (xii),

76. Rs. 10,000 for the Satyavadi Vidyalaya.

77. Rs. 5,000 Swavalamban Rashtriya Pathshala (xiv).

78. Rs. 5,000 to Dr. Sathaye for carrying on such work as the Congress Labour Committee decides (xxxiv)."

IV. Grants voted by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Nagpur on 7th, 8th, 11th and 12th July 1928 :—

"79. Rs. 20,000 to Sjt. Brajaraj, Secretary, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan for the work of teaching Hindustani in the Madras Presidency (ix).

80. Rs. 2,000 to the C. P. Hindustani Provincial Congress Committee to be utilized for general Congress purposes with special regard to rendering help to Satyagraha in Nagpur (xi)"

The reader may not get a precise idea of the management or mismanagement of public funds by the Congress from this itemized account of expenditure. Was this expenditure regulated by any principle ? Was it distributed according to the needs of the Provinces? Consider the following table:—

Table 2

Provinces	Amount Granted	Population ⁹	Percentage Grant due on the basis of Population ratio to total Population	Percentage of Grant actually paid
	Rs.			
General-All-India ¹⁰	4,94,000	227,238,000		10
Bombay	26,90,381	16,012,623	8	54.3
Madras	5,05,000	42,319,000	18	10.1
Bihar and Orissa	5,65,000	33,820,000	15	11.3
U.P.	3,11,200	45,376,000	20	6.26
Sind	1,13,000	3,279,377	—	2.2
Assam	51,080	6,735,000	3	1.1
Bengal	50,000	46,241,000	20	1.0
O.P.	47,000	12,780,000	5	.95
Punjab	45,000	20,675,000	9	.9
Hyderab	40,000	—	—	.81
AJmer	25,000	—	—	.5
Foreign	14,000	—	—	.28

Total	49,50,661			
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Was it distributed on the basis of cultural units and their relative size ?
Compare the following figures;—

Table 3

Linguistic Areas	Total Grant	Amount of Grant	Percentage of the Total Grant to the Province	Percentage of Population of the Area to the Population of the Province
	Rs.	Rs.		
Bombay Presidency	26,90,381	—	—	100
Gujarat	—	26,22,381	97.4	18
Maharashtra	—	43,000	1.6	69
Karnatak,,,	—	25,000	0.93	13
Central	47,000	—	—	100
Marathi Districts		10,000	21.2	45
Hindustani	—	37,000	78.7	55
Madras Presidency	5,05,000	—	—	100
Tamil Nad	—	1,03,000	20.4	38
Andhra	—	3,02,000	60.0	52
Kerala		1,00,000	19.6	10
Bihar and Orissa	5,65,000	—		100
Bihar	—	5,15,000	91.0	73
Orissa	—	50,000	0.9	27

From these figures it is clear that the distribution of these sums was not made on the basis of any intelligible principle. There is no relation between the grants and the population, nor between the grants and the claims of the cultural units. A province like Bombay with a population of one and a half crores gets as much as 27 lakhs while U. P. and Madras with a population of about 4 crores each get no more than about five lakhs severally. Consider the grants in relation to cultural units. Take Bombay Presidency. It includes three cultural units, Maharashtra, Gujrath and Karnatak. Out of the 26 lakhs and 90

thousand given to the Bombay Presidency Gujrath with only 18 percent of the population of the Province got as much as 26 lakhs and 22 thousand i.e., 97.4 percent and Maharashtra with a population of 69 per cent got only Rs. 48,000 or 1.6 per cent and Karnatak, with a population of 13 per cent got Rs. 25,000 or .9 per cent of the grant. In C. P. out of a total grant of Rs. 47,000 the Hindustani districts having 55 per cent of the population got Rs. 37,000 or 78.7 per cent while the Marathi speaking districts having 45 per cent of the population got only Rs. 10,000 i.e., 21.2 per cent. In Bihar and Orissa out of the total grant of 5 lakhs and 65 thousand Bihar got 5 lakhs and 15 thousand or 91 per cent with a population of 78 per cent, and Orissa got only 50 thousand or 9 per cent while its population was as much as 27 percent. The same inequity is noticeable in the distribution of grants in the three areas of the Madras Presidency.

There was not only no principle, there was shameful favouritism in the distribution of the fund. Out of the total of 49 1/2 lakhs which was distributed in the three years Gujrath— Mr. Gandhi's province—got 26 1/4 lakhs while the rest of India got 28 lakhs. This means that a population numbering 29 1/2 lakhs got 26 1/4 lakhs while the rest of India numbering about 23 crores got 23 lakhs !

There was no check, no control, no knowing for what purpose money was voted, and to whom it was granted. Note the following cases :—

Table 4

Moneys allotted but kept at the Disposal of Individuals without Appropriating them to any specified purpose	Moneys allotted without Appropriation to any purpose without naming the guarantee
Rs.	Rs.
Moulvi Badrul Haaan 40,000	To Gujrath 3,00,000
T. Prakasam 7,000	To Gujrath 18,00,000
C. Rajagopalachariar 1,000	To Gujrath 3,00,000
Barajaj 20,000	
Mr. Gandhi 1,00,000	

It is not known whether these huge sums kept at the disposal of the named payees were accounted for or who received the formidable amounts made payable to the nameless payees. Even if there were satisfactory answers to

these questions there can be no doubt that a worse case of frenzied finance of extravagance and waste, it would be very difficult to find. It is a sad episode marked by a reckless plunder committed by the predatory leaders of the Congress of public money for nursing their own constituencies without any qualms of conscience.

It is unnecessary to pursue the story of the organised and systematic loot by Congressmen of the balance of 1 crore and 80 lakhs which was spent in subsequent years. It is enough to say that never was there such an organised loot of public money. The point of immediate interest however is that the scrutiny of this list of grants does not show the amelioration of the Untouchables, which has been one of the purposes for which money has been advanced from the Swaraj Fund. One would have expected the Congress to make the amelioration of the Untouchables as the first charge on the Swaraj Fund. It should have at least made it a charge if not the first charge especially when thousands of rupees were spent on feeding briefless lawyers who were alleged to have given up practice in the cause of the nation without even an inquiry whether they had any, when thousands of rupees were spent to feed toddy drawers who had given up their profession for living on alms from public fund and many other wild cat schemes carrying the marks of dishonesty on their faces. But it did nothing of the kind. Instead, the Congress proposed that a separate fund should be started for the amelioration of the Untouchables. And what was to be the dimension of this separate Untouchable Fund ? The All-India Congress Committee fixed it at five lakhs. The Working Committee felt it was too big an amount for so unimportant and so unprofitable a work as the amelioration of the Untouchables and reduced its total to Rs. two lakhs. Two lakhs for sixty millions Untouchables!!

This was the grand sum that was fixed by the Congress for the salvage of the Untouchables. How much of this was actually appropriated ? Here are the figures:—

Table 5

Purpose	Amount Sanctioned
	Rs.
Rajamuhendry Depressed Class Mission	1,000
Antyaj Karyalaya, Ahmedabad	5,000
Antyaj Karyalaya, Ahmedabad	17,381
Depressed Classes Work in Andhra	7,000
National Social Conference for Depressed Classes	3,000

Work	
Tamil District P.C.C. for Depressed Classes Work	10,000
Total	43,381

To sum up, the Congress could find only Rs. 48,881 out of Rs. 49 1/2 lakhs which it spent for carrying out the Constructive otherwise known as the Bardoli Programme in which the uplift of the Untouchables was given so much prominence. Can there be a grosser instance of insincerity than this ? Where is the love for the Untouchables which the Congress professed for the Untouchables ? Where is the desire of the Congress to undertake the uplift of the Untouchables ? Would it be wrong to say that the Bardoli resolution was a fraud in so far as it related to the Untouchables ?

One is however bound to ask one question. Where was Mr. Gandhi when all this was happening to the cause of the Untouchables in the Congress Camp ? The question is very relevant because it was Mr. Gandhi who had laid stress, ever since he entered the Congress, upon the intimate relation between the winning of Swaraj and the abolition of Untouchability. In the Young India, which was Mr. Gandhi's organ of 8th November 1921, Mr. Gandhi wrote :—

"Untouchability cannot be given a secondary place on the programme. Without the removal of the taint Swaraj is & meaningless term. Workers should welcome social boycott and even public execration in the prosecution of their work. I consider the removal of untouchability as a most powerful factor in the process of attainment of Swaraj."

Accordingly, he had been exhorting the Untouchables not to join hands with the British against Swaraj but to make common cause with the Hindus and help to win Swaraj. In an article in Young India dated 20th October 1920, Mr. Gandhi addressed the Untouchables in the following terms ;—

"There are three courses open to these down-trodden members of the nation. For their impatience they may call in the assistance of the slave-owning Government. They will get it, but they will fall from the frying pan into the fire. Today they are slaves of slaves. By seeking Government aid, they will be used for suppressing their kith and kin. Instead of being sinned against, they will themselves be the sinners. The Musalmans tried it and failed. They found that they were worse than before. The Sikhs did it unwittingly and failed. Today there is no more discontented community in India than the Sikhs. Government aid is, therefore, no solution.

The second is rejection of Hinduism and wholesale conversion to Islam or Christianity. And if a change of religion could be justified for worldly betterment I would advise it without hesitation. But religion is a matter of the

heart. No physical inconvenience can warrant abandonment of one's own religion. If the inhuman treatment of the Panchamas were a part of Hinduism, its rejection would be a paramount duty both for them and for those like me who would not make a fetish even of religion and condone every evil in its sacred name. But I believe that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. It is rather its excrescence to be removed by every effort. And there is quite an army of Hindu reformers who have set their heart upon ridding Hinduism of this blot. Conversion therefore, I hold, is not remedy whatsoever.

Then, there remains, finally, self-help and self-dependence, with such aid as the non-Panchama Hindus will render of their own motion, not as a matter of duty. And herein comes the use of Non-co-operation. . . Therefore, by way of protest against Hinduism, the Panchamas can certainly stop all contact and connection with the other Hindus so long as the special grievances are maintained. But this means organised intelligent effort. And so far as I can see, there is no leader among the Panchamas who can lead them to victory through Non-cooperation,

The better way therefore, perhaps, is for the Panchamas heartily to join the great national movement that is now going on for throwing off the slavery of the present Government. It is easy enough for the Panchama friends to see that Non co-operation against this evil Government presupposes cooperation. between the different sections forming the Indian nation."

In the same article Mr. Gandhi told the Hindus ;—

"The Hindus must realise that, if they wish to offer successful Non-co-operation against the Government they must make common cause with the Panchamas; even as they have made common cause with the Musalmans."

He repeated the warning in the Young India of 29th December 1920 in which he said : —

"Non-co-operation against the Government means cooperation among the governed, and if Hindus do not remove the sin of untouchability, there will be no Swaraj whether in one year or in one hundred years. Swaraj is as unattainable without the removal of the sins of untouchability as it is without Hindu-Muslim unity."

From all this, one would expect Mr. Gandhi to see that the Congress policy of ameliorating the condition of the Untouchables as set out in the Bardoli resolution was given effect to. The fact is that Mr. Gandhi, besides giving utterance to pious platitude, did not take the slightest interest in the programme of the amelioration. If he was so minded, he could have appointed another Committee. If he was so minded, he could have saved a

large part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund from the organised loot that was being carried on by Congressmen and reserved it for the benefit of the Untouchables. Strange as it may appear, he sat silent and unconcerned. Instead of feeling any remorse, Mr. Gandhi justified his indifference to the cause of the Untouchables by arguments so strange that no one would believe them. They are to be found in the Young India of 20th October 1920:--

"Should not we the Hindus wash our bloodstained hands before we ask the English to wash theirs ? This is a proper question reasonably put. And if a member of a slave, nation could deliver the suppressed classes from their slavery, without freeing myself from my own I would do so today. But it is an impossible task. A slave has not the freedom even to do the right thing."

Mr. Gandhi concluded by saying ;--

"That process has commenced and whether the Panchamas deliberately take part in it or not, the rest of the Hindus dare not neglect them without hampering their own progress. Hence though the Panchama problem is as dear to me as life, itself, I rest satisfied with the exclusive attention to national non-co-operation. I feel sure that the greater includes the less."

Thus ended the second chapter of what the Congress has done to the Untouchables. The regrettable part of this tragedy is the realisation of the fact how Mr. Gandhi has learned to find unctiousness in illusions. Whether Mr. Gandhi likes to live in a world of illusions may be a matter of doubt. But there is no doubt he likes to create illusions in order to use them as arguments to support his cherished proposition. The reason he has given for not taking personal responsibility for the uplift of the Untouchables furnishes the best evidence of this habit of Mr. Gandhi. To tell the Untouchables that they must not act against the Hindus, because they will be acting against their kith and kin, may be understood. But to assume that the Hindus regard the Untouchables as their kith and kin is to set up an illusion. To ask the Hindus to undertake the removal of untouchability is good advice. But to go to the length of assuring oneself that the Hindus are so overwhelmed with a sense of shame for the inhuman treatment they have accorded to the Untouchables that they dare not fail to abolish untouchability and that there is a band of Hindu Reformers pledged to do nothing but remove untouchability is to conjure an illusion to fool the Untouchables and to fool the world at large. It may be sound logic to argue that what benefits the whole also benefits the part and that one need not confine himself to looking after the part. But to assume that a piece, as separate as the Untouchables, is a part of the Hindu whole is to deceive oneself. Few know what tragedies the Untouchables as well as the country have had go through on account of the illusions of Mr. Gandhi.

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Chapter III